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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
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HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
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CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
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COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#). Mideast
- [2](#). Darfur

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Key stories in the media:  
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Major media quoted PM Ehud Olmert as saying in Paris Wednesday that realignment is unstoppable. The Jerusalem Post wrote that Olmert left his meeting with French President Jacques Chirac encouraged that, despite French opposition to unilateral moves, Chirac did not express opposition to his plan. Maariv quoted Olmert as saying that, just like Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Hamas government wants to destroy Israel

Ha'aretz reported that Hamas stopped firing Qassam rockets at Israel on Wednesday, after Israel warned that it would attack Hamas leaders. Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that in response to Hamas's restraint, the IDF will not attack Hamas targets as long as it does not renew terror attacks. Ha'aretz reported that Hamas's instructions to its operatives to stop the rocket fire were given Monday night, during a meeting between Palestinian PM Ismail Haniyeh and top Hamas military wing officials in Gaza. The newspaper wrote that the other Palestinian organizations are ignoring the change in Hamas's position and are expected to continue firing at Israel. The media reported that Islamic Jihad fired a Qassam rocket at a strategic infrastructure facility near Ashkelon on Wednesday, causing no injuries. This morning, electronic media and leading news websites reported that several Qassam rockets fell on Sderot, wounding a few Israelis. Israel Radio reported that Islamic Jihad and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades claimed responsibility for the launchings.

Maariv reported that the Palestinians have started manufacturing Katyusha rockets on their own. The newspaper cited the IDF's concern that the rockets could reach a 20-km range, thus becoming able to hit Ashkelon.

Leading media (banner in Yediot) reported that over the past 24 hours, Israel transferred 950 M16 rifles to Ramallah and Gaza. The shipments left Jordan through Allenby Bridge. Media reported that last week Israeli groups filed three petitions at the High Court of Justice against the move.

Major media quoted Marc Garlasco, a former Pentagon "battle damage expert" associated with Human Rights Watch, who visited the Gaza beach where seven Palestinians were killed on Friday, as saying that "all the evidence points" to a "155-mm Israeli land-based artillery shell" as the cause of the blast. Media reported that reiterating its Tuesday conclusions, the IDF was quick to reject the Human Rights Watch report. Ha'aretz quoted Olmert as saying Wednesday in Paris that Tuesday's incident in Gaza City, in which seven

Palestinian civilians were killed, was a tragedy that could not be avoided. The Jerusalem Post quoted Olmert as saying in Paris that there is no humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, even as the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a statement warning of a collapse in the PA health system. The Jerusalem Post reported that Olmert supported his statement by saying that the PA was not interested in some of the 50 million shekels (around USD 11 million) in drugs and medical supplies Israel had agreed to transfer to it.

Maariv reported that the Jerusalem Municipality plans to build high-rise hotels in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. The newspaper cited the outrage of the Muslim Waqf over the reported plan.

Yediot and Maariv quoted Ra'anana Dinur, the DG of the Prime Minister's Office, as saying Wednesday before the Knesset's Finance Committee that the cost of the implementation of the realignment plan is currently assessed at 9 billion shekels (around USD 2 billion). Major media reported that the far Right has issued a brochure advocating various violent steps to prevent the implementation of the realignment plan, including setting trucks on fire, placing viruses in defense establishment computers, and putting laxatives in the soldiers' food.

Yediot and other media reported that on Wednesday, Palestinian FM Mahmoud Zahar carried a great amount of dollars (hundreds of millions, according to Yediot; 20 million, according to Israel Radio) through the Rafah border crossing from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. Israel Radio quoted Hamas members as saying that the money will mainly serve to pay the salaries of the members of the newly-established Hamas militia. Israel Radio reported that World Bank Director James Wolfensohn has announced that the Bank is discussing with the Quartet ways of assisting the PA. All media reported on the chaos in the PA. Major media cited Palestinian media as saying that Egypt is trying to extricate the PA from the crisis it has been in since the elections, and that it has proposed that Hamas and PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas form a government of technocrats, to be headed by the Nablus businessman and millionaire Munib el-Masri. In return, Abu Mazen would announce the cancellation of the referendum.

The Jerusalem Post and Israel Radio reported that the High Court of Justice is due to hear eight petitions -- some by settlers, other ones by Palestinians -- protesting the separation fence in Gush Etzion (the Etzion Bloc). The court will also hear petitions against the barrier route in other parts of the West Bank. This morning, Israel Radio reported that the court ordered the dismantling of part of the fence around the settlement of Tzufin, near Qalqilya.

Maariv cited an unidentified demographic survey that found that Jews in Israel will become a minority in 2077.

Ha'aretz reported that methods now employed by the IDF after it abandoned its "neighbor procedure" (the use of Palestinian civilians to order other Palestinians to leave their houses to be arrested) eight months ago include more frequent demolition of houses. The newspaper also reported that the neighbors' security has not increased.

Yediot reported that during a secret visit to Israel this week, a senior delegation of officials from the Indian Space Research Organization discussed joint Israeli-Indian projects and examined new products made by Israel's defense industries.

Ha'aretz reported that a petition has been filed before the High Court of Justice, claiming that the incarceration of 44 Africans from Niger, Togo, Liberia, Rwanda, and Guinea-Conakry, who infiltrated into Israel since the beginning of March, is illegal.

Hatzofe reported that Jacob Edery, a cabinet minister in charge of liaison between the government and the Knesset, refused to pledge that a GOI representative would visit convicted spy Jonathan Pollard in his US jail.

The Jerusalem Post printed an AP story quoting US officials as saying that Hai Waknine, a Los Angeles-based Israeli, who is a reputed enforcer of a notorious Israel cartel, decided to take a plea deal Tuesday in the midst of his federal trial after a top-ranking member of the group testified against him.

Ha'aretz cited the results of a Pew Research Center

survey, which polled 17,000 people around the world. The survey found that there has been a significant rise in the level of the European public's support for Israel compared to its support for the Palestinians. For instance, French support for Israel has doubled over the past four years, while support for the Palestinians has remained almost exactly the same.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "[Defense] Minister [Amir Peretz] ... could leave his mark ... by directing a restrained and responsible policy."

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "If [Israeli] concessions are not accompanied by an iron hand towards aggression, we will have no existence here."

Liberal columnist Yehonatan Gefen wrote on page one of Maariv: "What is being pinpointed and thwarted here is [Israel's] morality and humaneness."

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz: "it is difficult for European public opinion to digest a plan that would legitimize the forceful annexation of territories. This isn't America."

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Israel should stop all types of aid to the Gaza Strip within a few months. Not as a step of revenge, but as a step that reflects the end of the road, now that the occupation has ended."

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in popular, pluralist Maariv and the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Many hundreds or thousands of innocents might still be alive today had the US related to Arafat properly."

Block Quotes:  
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I. "Restraint Is Needed"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (6/15): "Israel is waging a defensive battle in Gaza.... However, the Israeli campaign against terrorism in Gaza is not free of mistakes or malfunctions.... It would seem that [Defense] Minister [Amir Peretz], who is still seeking his way in the new post, could leave his mark by strictly monitoring the IDF's use of force in the territories and by directing a restrained and responsible policy."

II. "Ethical, Indeed"

Editor-in-Chief Amnon Dankner wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (6/15): "We are not the ones carrying out a campaign of terrorism from inside a populated area, trying to use innocent people as human shields. We are not the ones behaving unethically, worshipping death and violence. We are trying to stop the fire at Sderot and Ashkelon. Is that wrong, too? Do the inhabitants of the western Negev not have human rights, and do their children not have the right to sleep one night without fear? Do they not have the right to live in quiet? Which 'human-rights organization' will protect them? Only the organization known as the IDF, it seems. Although it has no American or British volunteers with goatees, thinning hair and lunatic ideas, it has officers who are ethical, discreet and cautious, who try to kill the bad guys before the bad guys kill the good guys. That sounds very simplistic, but what can we do -- sometimes the simple truth is not terribly complicated.... I write these words from the belief that we must evacuate as much Palestinian territory as possible in the West Bank, concentrating ourselves in a smaller amount of territory in which the Jewish majority will be solid for generations. Precisely out of the desire to give the Palestinians conditions for independent existence and self-definition. Precisely out of willingness to give up much of the territory of the Land of Israel, including parts of Jerusalem. If such concessions are not accompanied by an iron hand towards aggression, we will have no existence here. If such concessions are

not made by those who have iron in their backbones, we will not survive here."

### III. "Blood on the Wings"

Liberal columnist Yehonatan Gefen wrote on page one of Maariv (6/15): "The most moral army in the world, which does not kill, only thwarts, is gradually losing its ability to kill only terrorists, and I would not be surprised if for every pinpointed killing -- at least ten clustering people were killed who had not done harm to anyone, and were just there. The most moral army in the world, as we like to call our troops, is following (mainly flying) in the footsteps of the lost US army in Iraq. Iraqi civilians who died in the war are quite irrelevant as far as Bush and Tony Blair are concerned.... Is there anyone up there, above the explosions, the missiles and the death of innocent people, who can end the pinpointed killing from far away and high up, which is definitely starting to look a bit like a small massacre? And it is not them. It is us. And what is being pinpointed and thwarted here is our morality and humaneness. Ours. Not theirs. And if it is truly impossible to see civilians clustering from an aircraft, how is it possible to avoid thwarting them? And yes, it appears that aircraft can also have blood on their wings."

### IV. "Waiting For a Clear Plan"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz (6/15): "After decades of strong, total opposition to the settlements in the territories and to any Israeli presence beyond the Green Line ... it is difficult for European public opinion to digest a plan that would legitimize the forceful annexation of territories. This isn't America. In Europe there are many Muslims, the pro-Palestinian lobby is strong and rooted, and it is impossible to expect Blair to praise Olmert's 'daring' the way Bush did. And if friendly Britain is hesitant about the convergence, it will be harder for the countries on the Continent to digest it."

### V. "Divorce from the Palestinians"

Middle East affairs commentator Dr. Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/15): "Have we really left the Gaza Strip? The answer might be negative, since the new Israeli government has still not adopted a clear policy towards the Gaza Strip and the Palestinians in general. On one hand, Israel continues to sustain the Gaza Strip economically, as if it were not foreign territory.... But there is a third way -- a middle road, otherwise known as an 'isolationist policy.' In 1823, US President James Monroe established a policy, known as the 'Monroe Doctrine,' according to which his country would not participate in the wars of the European powers unless US rights were violated or it faced grave danger. It is not by chance that former prime minister Ariel Sharon called the withdrawal from Gaza 'disengagement.' This places an irreversible differentiating and separating line. Disengagement is divorce. On the basis of this policy, Israel should stop all types of aid to the Gaza Strip within a few months. Not as a step of revenge, but as a step that reflects the end of the road, now that the occupation has ended. As far as Israel is concerned, there should be no difference between Gazan and Syrian or Jordanian cities."

### VI. "Covering Up For Arafat"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan commented in popular, pluralist Maariv and the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/15): "Despite the fact that the American administration knew and had legal proof of Yasser Arafat's direct involvement in the murder of its own diplomats [in Khartoum in 1973], they turned a blind eye. On the contrary, throughout all the years, the Americans exerted pressure on Israel to turn Arafat into a 'peace partner'.... President George W. Bush completely repudiated Arafat in a speech he gave on June 24, 2002.... What should be on our minds, however, is how many hundreds or thousands of innocents might still be alive today had the US related to Arafat properly, as the depraved murderer that he was and treated him accordingly, already back in 1973, when it had the proof that it kept hidden from its own citizens. After all, the US, unlike Israel, is a country in which law and order abide."

### 12. Darfur:

Summary:

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Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "No matter how its enemies behave, Israel should be held to the highest standard of behavior."

Block Quotes:

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"Israel's Response to Arab Genocide"

Liberal columnist Larry Derfner wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (6/15): "I think Israel is being amazingly callous by keeping about 200 Sudanese refugees, a large proportion of whom fled the Darfur genocide, in jail now for up to a year. I hope Israel realizes soon that these Sudanese are not enemies, but rather victims of an enemy government, and take the advice of Elie Wiesel and others by granting them asylum. Until then, Israel deserves to be deplored for its paranoia-fueled mistreatment of some of the most ravaged people on earth. And if it ends up deporting them, Israel will deserve all the condemnation it will certainly get. No matter how its enemies behave, Israel should be held to the highest standard of behavior. But Israel's enemies should be held to the same standard, and they're not, are they?"

JONES